



Frequently Asked Questions

Who are the potential users and applications of the Grades 6-12 Edition of the QM Rubric?

The ultimate beneficiaries of the Grades 6–12 Rubric, we believe, will be students experiencing more effectively designed online and blended courses. But how do we expect this new tool to be used? The following grid is our initial assessment of the audiences that are likely to benefit from the availability of the Grades 6-12 QM Rubric.

Audience	Application
Teachers, Instructional Designers and Design Teams	Improve existing courses Build more effective courses
Public and Private Virtual Schools and Publishers	Demonstrate commitment to quality to school systems and other stakeholders
Schools Administrators	Screen and select courses
Students, Parents and Counselors	Seeking quality courses for students
School Systems, Local and State Boards	Provide evidence of quality assurance and meet demands for accountability
College Admissions Officers	Evaluating online learning experiences of applicants

What are the key elements in the Grades 6-12 Rubric?

In the early reviews, it was concluded that almost all the postsecondary standards were relevant to these courses, but that they did not address some fundamental considerations in the design of K–12 courses, such as the role of parents, the greater concern with student privacy, and the common practice of teacher communication with students and other stakeholders outside the course management system. It was also clear that the annotations that are a key element of the rubric needed to speak more directly to the details and circumstances of K–12 education, and the resulting rubric bridges these gaps.

What is the evolution of Quality Matters into K-12 online education?

Over the seven years of its existence, one of the opportunities frequently mentioned for the further development of the Quality Matters Rubric has been its potential use for quality assurance in K-12 online education. QM chose not to enter this arena earlier, despite the dramatic growth of K-12 online schools, programs, and courses, because it lacked a credible partner with intimate knowledge of K-12. Only through such a partnership with the Florida Virtual School and piloting the rubric, could QM be assured that significant differences between K-12 and postsecondary education would be taken into account.

What was the process for testing the G6-12 Rubric?

The new G6-12 Rubric was tested by applying it to a range of middle and high school courses. A cohort of reviewers was trained for this purpose and the reviews took place in January 2010. Eight courses were selected for review – three from the Florida Virtual School, two from the Maryland Board of Education, two from Minnesota Virtual Schools and one from a school district in Illinois. The results of these reviews were analyzed and resulted in some modification of the rubric annotations and instructions to reviewers.

Among the findings of the eight pilot reviews, several points are worth noting. Primarily, none of the eight courses met Quality Matters Standards in the first pass, though several came close. This result is not surprising, since the rubric is new, and no similarly detailed standards for course design exist in the K-12 arena. Furthermore, the teachers and other course developers responsible for the design of these eight courses had advance access to the standards, which we encourage in our existing higher education process and will recommend as the rubric is implemented for middle and high school courses.

The top six standards that were most frequently missed:

- Adherence to Institutional Accessibility Policy (75% missed)
- Statement on Grading Policy (62.5%)
- Statement of Criteria for Evaluation (62.5%)
- Statement of Standards for Teacher Responsiveness (62.5%)
- Statement of Minimal Technical Skills (62.5%)
- Course Introduction (50%)